

United States Department of the Interior
Executive Order 13522:
Creating Labor-Management Forums to Improve Delivery of Government Services
Implementation Plan

March 9, 2010

On December 9, 2009, the President issued Executive Order 13522, Creating Labor-Management Forums to Improve Delivery of Government Services. Follow-up instructions regarding the implementation of the Order were provided on January 29, 2010.

Background:

The Department of the Interior (DOI or Interior) has a long history of involvement in labor relations. DOI had a number of union recognitions in the 1940's including many places where wages were negotiated. Much of Interior's experience was used in the development of the first Executive Order (10988) covering labor relations in the federal sector.

DOI has approximately 150 exclusive recognitions covering about thirty percent, or 20,000, of its employees. The Federation of Indian Service Employees (FISE), an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), is the Department's largest unit, representing more than 7,000 employees in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, Office of the Special Trustee and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. The majority of the other recognitions are with the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). However, DOI also has recognitions with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), National Association of Government Employees (NAGE), National Treasury Employees Unions (NTEU), Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and numerous other unions.

DOI's various union recognitions are characterized by the normal range of activity and labor-management cooperation. There are a number of inactive units, units with vibrant and productive dealings, and those which are extremely adversarial. However, DOI has historically encouraged labor-management cooperation as an effective and efficient means of doing "business". Cooperative relationships have served to significantly reduce the number of grievances, unfair labor practices and other third-party disputes.

Describe how the department or agency will conduct a baseline assessment of the current state of labor relations within the department of agency:

We will develop a baseline survey instrument in coordination with the unions with which the DOI has a National Consultation relationship. Specifically, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) and the Federation of Indian Service Employees (FISE) and DOI shall collaborate on an appropriate instrument to assess the current state of labor relations within DOI. Once finalized, the survey will be administered by each bureau/office in DOI and each will report back to DOI on the current state of labor relations. To assist in the development of this survey instrument, we are hopeful that the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations (National Council) and/or Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will provide further guidance and/or examples from which we can work.

Report to the extent to which the department or agency has developed labor-management forums , as set forth in subsection (a)(1) of the Executive Order:

As noted above, DOI has historically encouraged labor-management cooperation as an effective and efficient means of fulfilling our mission and goals and of improving the delivery of government service. Throughout DOI, a number of bargaining units and management representatives have operated, and continue to operate, under a “labor-management forum” arrangement. These existing arrangements will be adapted to carry out the requirements of the Executive Order. To promote further development of labor-management forums, the Secretary shall issue a statement endorsing his support of the development of cooperative labor-management relationships and labor-management forums at appropriate levels within Interior as outlined in the Executive Order. Further, DOI will work with the unions holding national consultation rights to establish a labor-management forum at the Department level. We envision that efforts at the Department level can serve as a model for further development of labor-management forums throughout DOI.

Explain how the department or agency will work with the exclusive representatives of its employees through its labor-management forums to develop department-, agency-, or bargaining unit-specific metrics to monitor improvements in such areas as labor-management satisfaction, productivity gains, cost savings, and other areas as identified by the labor-management forum’s participants:

DOI will work with the national unions via the Departmental labor-management forum to develop initial metrics to monitor improvements as described in the Executive Order. We anticipate those initial metrics will then serve as a model for local labor-management forums to self-evaluate their improvements in the areas identified by the labor-management forum’s participants. However,

local units will be encouraged to start working on solving problems and improving the way work is done regardless of whether specific metrics are already in place. This will allow for labor-management forums at the level of recognition to develop metrics that fit the particular tasks for which they are responsible.

The Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary, as well as the Departmental labor-management forum, will monitor results achieved and require the local labor-management forums to report on progress in this area. To assist in the development of appropriate metrics, we plan to use many the metrics that the National Council is developing and which were discussed at the February 26, 2010, meeting of the National Council as well as utilize the in-house expertise of DOI employees possessing expertise in study design and progress measurement. Further, the forums will be encouraged to look at the things the Department is already measuring (e.g. strategic plan, GPRA goals) and adapt appropriate metrics to their work.

Explain the department's or agency's plan for devoting sufficient resources to the implementation of the plan:

DOI will provide appropriate funding to meet logistical needs including meeting space, preparation of materials and any other necessary costs for DOI management representatives serving on a DOI labor-management forum. Unions participating in labor-management forums will provide funding for any travel of union representatives necessary to participate in DOI labor-management forums, unless specifically addressed in an applicable collective bargaining agreement. Funding will also be secured, as appropriate, for any additional costs which are not anticipated at this time.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact Jodi B. Vargas, DOI Labor Relations Advisor, on 202-208-7764 or Jodi.Vargas@ios.doi.gov